



Representative Bill Eickmeyer



A Report to the 35th District

Spring 2000

Dear Fellow Citizens of the 35th District:

Because of a publishing deadline, I must submit this report before we have produced the supplemental budget. Issues such as transit, ferries, health care and law enforcement may very well be decided after this report is sent to the publisher.



I was one of the speakers at the big Save Our Ferries rally earlier this year.

1. Ferries:

My position on ferries is that they must be fully funded.

The ferry system must be given priority above any new construction of systems such as light rail for the East Sound.

Our ferries are every bit as important to us and our social and economic needs as I-5 is to Seattle, Tacoma and Everett.

We should preserve and protect what we have before putting scarce funding into new systems. That's like building a new garage after the house burns down.



2. Rural economic development:

Although there is still a big gap between our rural and urban economies, we have taken steps to correct that situation.

My legislation, House Bill 2260, and the Senate bill we passed last year built the foundation for new economic infrastructure in our rural areas. This year, we continued with a bill allowing our rural public utility districts to supply high-tech bandwidth lines needed now and in the future.

I introduced another proposal this year, House Bill 2467, that would have amended the Growth Management Act to make it friendlier to rural areas. Another plan I sponsored, House Bill 2468, would have helped Kitsap County. Unfortunately, both bills were stopped in committee. I'll be right back next year with the same bills.

3. Salmon-recovery:

Thanks to our citizen-based Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group and the terrific work they've done for us, we did well in the first allocations distributed by the new Salmon Recovery Funding Board. In fact, we did better than any other region in the state!

We sent two memorials to Congress calling for the National Marine Fisheries Service to pay attention to the populations of predators such as sea lions, seals and Caspian terns. These predators devastate our salmon and steelhead at both ends of the migration routes. We must take a balanced approach to salmon-recovery — and look at all aspects contributing to their extinction before we place the full burden on riparian zones and institute costly measures that may not contribute, alone, to full recovery.

(P.S.: I am still pushing to make Hood Canal a sanctuary for all fish until recovery has been achieved!)



Representative Bill Eickmeyer

Olympia address:
322 John L. O'Brien Bldg.
PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600
(360) 786-7902

E-mail: eickmeyer_bi@leg.wa.gov

Committees:

Economic Development, Housing & Trade,
Democratic Vice Chair
Children & Family Services
Natural Resources

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4. Education:

Since the start we made last year, we've been pushing right along. We have new standards for students and educators that should help strengthen our public education.

We established the Better Schools Fund this year to improve the quality of instruction. It's so important that we close the skills gap in technical training that is essential for the careers of tomorrow.

Additional teacher-testing will also be implemented to make sure our students receive top-notch instruction.

A new provision in state policy will send tax relief to local taxpayers by increasing the state's share of the school-construction bill. We recognized a need to provide tax relief for citizens because the state had been slicing its support for building and repair projects.

Finally, we endorsed a measure requiring districts to establish emergency plans for dealing with on-campus violence.



5. Citizen participation:

Most people think the average citizen is left out in the cold when it comes to legislation. Don't you believe it!

Some of us believe we have a partnership with our constituents — and I've both produced and seen some very good legislation come from ideas that you bring to the table. In legislative committees, citizen testimony is highly regarded and professional lobbyists have lost many a fight because of you.

True — not all suggestions are doable. But when you hit the nail on the head, good things happen. Keep it coming.

Have an enjoyable summer (weather permitting) — and stay in touch. I enjoy even the crankiest letters.

Sincerely,

Bill Eickmeyer
State Representative
35th Legislative District

Representative Bill Eickmeyer
322 John L. O'Brien Bldg.
PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600
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